

March 20, 2026

By Email Only

Board Chair, Board of Environmental Protection

c/o Board Clerk Ruth Ann Burke 17 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0017

Ruth.a.burke@maine.gov

Re: Comments of Nancy C. Artz, Ph.D., on the Appeal of NECEC Transmission LLC Condition Compliance Order

Greetings Board Members,

I support the Appeal by the Co-Appellants Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine Audubon, Appalachian Mountain Club, and Trout Unlimited because the DEP's Order does not address the concerns raised by me and the Co-Appellants in our earlier testimony.

I am a resident of Cumberland, Maine. As an Emerita Professor who taught sustainable business, I am aware of the many reasons why commercial entities get away with externalizing costs (e.g., in this case, inadequately conserving and protecting mature forests). I also recognize how important your role is in ensuring that goal of the Conservation Plan is met in its entirety.

**Concerns:** As explained by my Co-Appellants with greater expertise,

- the definition of mature forest is not based in science,
- the plan does not ensure long-term protection for mature forests in the easement area,
- the plan does not ensure immediate protection of existing remaining mature forests from timber harvesting, thus delaying mitigation,
- the plan Fails to meet the 50,000-acre requirement through large forest blocks, ...

**Recommendation:** The conservation remedy proposed by the Appellants, or an alternative that achieves the same conservation goals, should be incorporated into the Conservation Plan. I fully support all of the Appellants' recommendations:

- 1) Purchase (in fee, not a conservation easement) at least an additional 10,000 acres to be owned and permanently managed as mature forest by the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) or a conservation organization.
- 2) Adopt a new, ecologically defensible definition of "mature forest" that applies to the entire Easement Area and prepare a new forest management plan that adheres to that definition
- 3) Create, within the Easement Area, a Special Management Area or Areas of at least 10,000 acres and consisting of no more than two contiguous blocks of at least 5,000 acres each, to be permanently managed as mature forest (as defined above), not subject to the shifting mosaic approach. This Special Management Area or Areas should be in addition to the mature forest

riparian buffers and could include some of the remaining late-successional and old growth forests on site now.

4) Establish additional no-cut areas and/or strict harvesting limitations in and around the little remaining ecologically mature forest within the Easement Area that will maintain those areas as mature forest indefinitely.

I urge you to reverse the DEP's order and require NECEC to submit a conservation plan that actually conserves and protects mature forests.

It is particularly important to me that the final conservation plan address ALL of the Appellants' concerns. Please resist the urge to 'compromise' so that only a subset of concerns are addressed. Anything less than addressing all of the concerns means that the goal of conserving/protecting mature forests is not adequately met.

With regards and thanks,

Nancy C. Artz, Ph.D.

cc, Service List